

## Ellen de Bruijne Projects

Susan Philipsz:

WAR DAMAGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (PAIR)



Ellen de Bruijne Projects is delighted to announce "War Damaged Musical Instruments" by the Turner Prize-winning artist Susan Philipsz. After being shown at several major museums and exhibitions spaces, including Tate Britain, we are more than proud to present this work at our canal house gallery space.

Over the past few years Susan Philipsz developed an ongoing archive of recordings of war damaged musical instruments from collections of museums in Britain and Germany. The stories associated with each of the instruments are varied and multi layered, ranging from that of the 14 year old drummer boy at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 to the clearing of the Alte Münz bunker at the end of the Second World War. Some instruments, like the Balaclava Bugle, have detailed histories while others, shot through with bullets, are damaged with no account of how or when the damage occurred. Some of the instruments were damaged on the battlefield while other instruments, salvaged from the bunker in Berlin, speak of the chaos civilian life is thrown into in times of conflict. All the instruments retain some trace of their use and all the recordings have a strong human presence. Philipsz focuses on the brass and woodwind family, as these instruments need the human breath to produce the sound. She is less interested in creating music than to see what sounds these instruments are still capable of, even if that sound is just the breath of the player as he or she exhales through the battered instrument.

Each channel corresponds to one of the damaged instruments and the sounds produced from the battered instruments are discordant and tentative. The notes recorded are based upon the tones of the military bugle call "The Last Post", a signal to soldiers who were still out and wounded or separated that the fighting was done, and to follow the sound of the call to find safety and rest, but the tune is deconstructed and fragmented to such an extent that it is practically unrecognisable. Gradually single notes build into a sequence of sounds that shape and fill the gallery.

For these installations Philipsz chose to use horn speakers that are reminiscent of a certain era, these speakers are very directional and can project sound across large distances. The horn speakers are suspended from the ceiling to clear the floor space for the audience and allow them to wander through the gallery space and hear the sound coming from different sides.

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